hearing device; said miniature reed switch assembly including:

a reed switch including first and second reeds providing electrical contacts spaced apart by an air gap, respective lead wires electrically connected to said first and second reeds and to said electrical circuit means, and

a latching magnet directly affixed to one of said first reed or the lead wire associated with said first reed, said latching magnet having a magnetic field of sufficient strength to maintain said first and second reeds together in electrical contact after said air gap is closed by an externally applied magnetic field of suitable magnitude, polarity and proximity, but of insufficient strength to bring said first and second reeds together in electrical contact while said air gap exists.

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1. (Amended, rewritten in clean form) A miniature hearing device adapted to be positioned substantially in the ear canal of a wearer, comprising:

electrical circuit means for receiving and processing incoming signals representative of audio signals and converting them to an output for exciting the tympanic membrane of the wearer;

a miniature magnetically controlled latchable reed switch assembly for controlling at least one of activation and deactivation of the hearing device or an operating parameter of the hearing device; said miniature reed switch assembly including:

a reed switch including first and second reeds providing electrical contacts spaced apart by an air gap, respective lead wires electrically connected to said first and second

reeds and to said electrical circuit means, and

a latching magnet directly affixed to one of said first reed or the lead wire associated with said first reed, said latching magnet having a magnetic field of sufficient strength to maintain said first and second reeds together in electrical contact after said air gap is closed by an externally applied magnetic field of suitable magnitude, polarity and proximity, but of insufficient strength to bring said first and second reeds together in electrical contact while said air gap exists.

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15. (Amended, marked-up version to show changes) A <u>miniature</u> hearing device adapted to fit within or to be surgically implanted adjacent to the ear canal of a human user and to be remotely controlled for powering the device on and off and/or for adjusting an operating parameter of the device to enhance the hearing of the user in response to a received incoming signal to the device representative of an audio signal, said device comprising a <u>miniature</u> magnetically controlled latchable reed switch assembly to enable the user to remotely control the device by use of an external magnet; said reed switch assembly including a reed switch having at least a pair of reeds spaced apart by an air gap, and a latching magnet directly affixed to one of said reeds or to a lead wire associated therewith for holding said reeds together in electrical contact after being closed by the user's passage of said external magnet in proximity thereto, but of inadequate magnetic field strength to close said air gap without aid; whereby once said reeds are closed, the latching magnet prevents separation thereof until said reeds are exposed to an external magnetic field of sufficient strength and opposite polarity to the field

of said latching magnet.

15. (Amended, rewritten in clean form) A miniature hearing device adapted to fit within or to be surgically implanted adjacent to the ear canal of a human user and to be remotely controlled for powering the device on and off and/or for adjusting an operating parameter of the device to enhance the hearing of the user in response to a received incoming signal to the device representative of an audio signal, said device comprising a miniature magnetically controlled latchable reed switch assembly to enable the user to remotely control the device by use of an external magnet; said reed switch assembly including a reed switch having at least a pair of reeds spaced apart by an air gap, and a latching magnet directly affixed to one of said reeds or to a lead wire associated therewith for holding said reeds together in electrical contact after being closed by the user's passage of said external magnet in proximity thereto, but of inadequate magnetic field strength to close said air gap without aid; whereby once said reeds are closed, the latching magnet prevents separation thereof until said reeds are exposed to an external magnetic field of sufficient strength and opposite polarity to the field of said latching magnet.

21. (Amended, marked-up version to show changes) A method of remotely activating and deactivating a <u>miniature</u> hearing device, comprising the steps of:

implementing the hearing device with a <u>miniature</u> magnetically controlled latchable reed switch assembly to apply and remove battery power to the device including a reed switch

having at least a pair of reeds spaced apart by an air gap and a latching magnet directly affixed to one of said reeds or to a lead wire associated therewith for holding said reeds together once closed by an external magnetic field of appropriate magnitude and polarity, but the latching magnet itself having inadequate magnetic field strength for unaided closure of said reeds spaced apart by said air gap, and

providing a control magnet means capable of generating a magnetic field of said appropriate magnitude for use by the wearer by placement in close proximity to said reed switch assembly (i) with one polarity when the hearing device is to be activated by closing said reeds to apply battery power to the device, so that the latching magnet prevents said reeds from being subsequently separated, and (ii) with the opposite polarity when the hearing device is to be deactivated by overcoming the latching force of the latching magnet and opening said reeds to remove battery power to the device.

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21. (Amended, rewritten in clean form) A method of remotely activating and deactivating a miniature hearing device, comprising the steps of:

implementing the hearing device with a miniature magnetically controlled latchable reed switch assembly to apply and remove battery power to the device including a reed switch having at least a pair of reeds spaced apart by an air gap and a latching magnet directly affixed to one of said reeds or to a lead wire associated therewith for holding said reeds together once closed by an external magnetic field of appropriate magnitude and polarity, but the latching magnet itself having inadequate magnetic field strength for unaided closure of said reeds